Concordia UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE STUDIES NEWS

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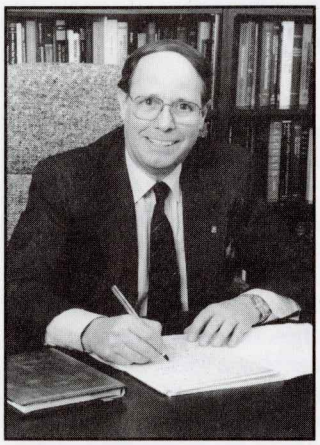
From the Dean's Desk :

Publish or Perish - A New Twist



The nature of doctoral dissertations is under scrutiny in all of North America. It is universally accepted that such dissertations must report the authors' original contributions to knowledge. The form of these reports is no longer uniform.

An ultra-conservative view maintains that a dissertation must consist of new and previously unpublished material. The ultra-liberal view, on the other hand, insists that a suitably linked compendium of reprints of published articles is acceptable. The position of most graduate schools on this issue is somewhere in between and is strongly influenced by the professional trends of the individual disciplines concerned.

Previously published material

As the publishing technology continues to evolve and as the pace of the electronic dissemination of knowledge accelerates, doctoral dissertations in science and engineering, in particular, will contain more and more previously published material. Many supervisors feel that dissertations containing peer-reviewed material are more likely to weather the storm of rigorous thesis defences than others. In light of such thought, they push their students to publish their findings as soon as their research activities warrant it. The impact of this peer judgment is so deep that a thesis containing no previously published results may readily be suspect and difficult to defend.

Autonomous Judgment

Graduate schools should engage in heartfelt debate concerning the extent to which examining committees are meant to pass an autonomous judgment on doctoral dissertations. Scholarly journals publish carefully reviewed articles and provide an anonymous endorsement of the work published. What happens when an examining committee dares to disagree with the value judgment of the referees of these prestigious journals?

A similar problem of disagreement in judgment may arise in more subjective fields as well. Presumably the purpose of creative writing programs, for example, is to develop the creativity and skills required to produce poetry, novels, and other forms of publishable writing. Is the publishability of a thesis therefore both a necessary and sufficient condition for its acceptability as a dissertation?

In the calendar of the School of Graduate Studies of the University of Toronto it is explicitly stated that all doctoral dissertations accepted by that university must eventually be published in their entirety and in basically unchanged form. It is interesting to speculate whether any awarded degree was ever withdrawn because the thesis was never published or, even worse, could not be published because no publisher was prepared to accept it. Until quite recently it was customary in Europe for doctoral candidates to publish their dissertations at their own expense using appropriate local printing firms rather than publishing houses. Thus publishability was of course always assured.

I think that the autonomy of the examination process within a university is a heritage that must be cherished and jealously guarded. On the other hand, examining bodies are no longer singularly isolated in their judgments. Where once examining committees reigned supreme, external constraints have imposed new standards of rigour and fairness. Universities have probably become better social partners because of it.

M. E. Szabo
Dean

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Rector Patrick Kenniff's Views on Graduate Education

The past decade has brought change to Concordia University's reputation in graduate studies and research. That trend is likely to continue over the next ten years, Rector Patrick Kenniff says.

Known best over the years for the quality of its undergraduate teaching, Concordia has gradually been acquiring a reputation for innovation and excellence in its graduate programs. Several new degrees have been introduced in the past decade in selected areas, offering an alternative to more traditional choices in the Montreal area. Programs such as the Ph.D. in Educational Technology and the Master's in the Teaching of Mathematics are offered uniquely at Concordia.

How much more should Concordia change? "I don't want the reputation of the university to shift entirely away from the strong reputation for good undergraduate teaching it has always had to a reputation for graduate studies and research, but rather to an equilibrium point which I think is beyond the place we are at now. This would involve a better, broader mix of graduate programs and research endeavours while maintaining our strong commitment to undergraduate learning," Dr. Kenniff says.

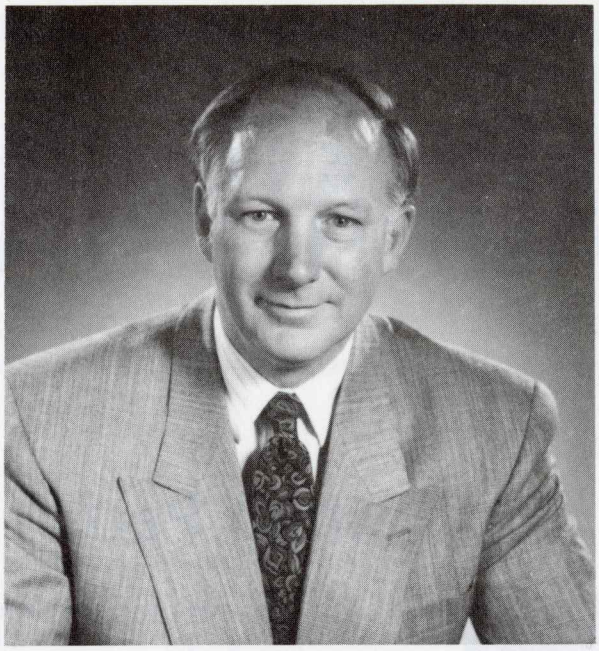
The recent growth in graduate studies has been in selected areas where Concordia has moved boldly and creatively — the Ph.D. in Humanities, for instance, a program unique in North America for its interdisciplinary approach to research. This program, which demands the integration of three normally distinct disciplines, appeals to original thinkers willing to take risks.

Dr. Kenniff wants to see more innovative programs like this, but also a broader range of graduate offerings in all disciplines from the master's to the doctoral level.

"There's no magic in numbers though," he adds. "At the present time, 15 or so per cent of our students are at the graduate level. Is the appropriate percentage 20 or 25? What is it? All I know is that I think it's higher than where we are now. If someone said 25, I would say yes, but not 50."

Diversify and Increase

Expansion, however, will come gradually. "In less than a decade, to look at 20 to 25% of our students in graduate studies is an unrealistic expectation. It is far better for us to focus on continuing the efforts to diversify and increase the number of graduate programs."



Dr. Patrick Kenniff

Growth in Concordia's graduate programs will come in three ways. First, by the development of additional innovative programs that distinguish themselves from what is offered at other Montreal universities. "Often in order to get programs approved, we have to show the government in what way we are fulfilling a need or responding to something that no one else is doing," he explains.

The second approach is to work with other universities in the city to develop joint programs, a pioneering effort which began in Montreal and has involved Concordia from the start. These joint programs enable Concordia and other universities in the city to pool resources that may not be sufficient in one university alone to mount a full graduate program. The programs have the added benefit of offering a bilingual, bicultural approach to disciplines through the involvement of both English and French language universities.

Examples of such programs are the Ph.D. in Administration and the Ph.D. in Communication, which Concordia offers with other Montreal universities.

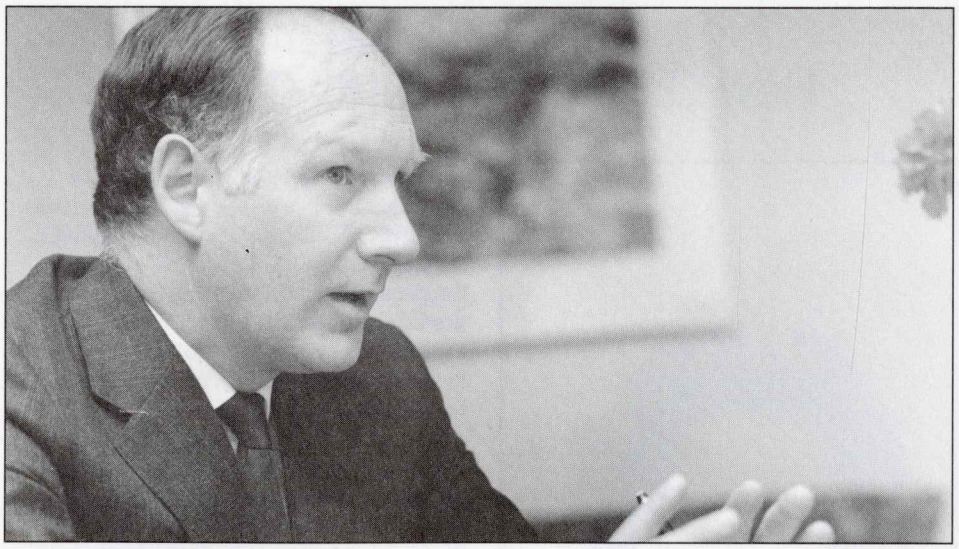
"We even opened one of our exclusive Ph.D. programs to make it a joint program with the Université de Québec à Montréal (UQAM) in Religious Studies, which allowed us to bring our strengths in Religious Studies — Eastern religions and Judaism — together with what UQAM has — the sociology of religion in Quebec. Put those together and the student can complete a Ph.D. with a variety of input from different specialized experiences," the Rector says.

Dr. Kenniff adds that the Dean of Graduate Studies at Concordia meets regularly with his colleagues in Montreal to promote these joint endeavours and identify new ones. Discussions are now focused on launching a Ph.D. in Art History to be offered by three Montreal universities including Concordia.

The third approach in expanding and diversifying graduate programs is to complete the range of Concordia's offerings at the master's and doctoral levels in the basic disciplines, even though these degrees are likely offered at other universities. An example is the consideration now being given by Concordia to begin a doctoral program in Biology, which would be based on the university's areas of specialization in that discipline.

Striking out in New Directions

So far Concordia has been particularly successful in its innovative approach, bringing in programs unique in Canada such as the Master's in Art Therapy, the only full professional training program in this field in the country. "A sense of commitment to striking out in new directions has always been a hallmark of this university going right back to the days at Sir George Williams and its pioneering years in adult education. It also goes back to the '60s when the university was still very



young but was developing graduate programs before the merger," Dr. Kenniff says. (Concordia was founded in 1974 through the merger of Sir George Williams University and Loyola College).

In mapping the future of graduate studies, Concordia needs to distinguish between two types of degrees and decide what balance to strike, Dr. Kenniff says.

Although it may be tempting to establish more professional degrees, such as the popular Master of Business Administration because of the high number of students attracted, more research-oriented degrees must also be started. Dr. Kenniff foresees the time as the 21st century approaches, when the numerous faculty members hired in the 1960s reach retirement age. "We have to think of that now in terms of training young people at the graduate level, particularly at the Ph.D. level," Dr. Kenniff says. He would like to avoid the situation in the '60s when universities were forced to recruit outside Canada because few qualified Canadians were available.

Excellent Evaluation System

Today, Concordia finds itself in a particularly good position to expand graduate studies. The university has in place an excellent evaluation system in graduate studies, a system that the Rector would like to see expanded to take in undergraduate studies. The graduate program evaluation system regularly brings in external evaluators to assess the strengths and weaknesses of each program. Based on a thorough review, their report goes to the program director, chair of the department and Board of Graduate Studies, where it is examined and recommendations carried out.

Another impetus to graduate studies is the vast improvements to the library system. "Already we hear very favourable comments from students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels about the Vanier Library and what a joy it is to work in that building," Dr. Kenniff says. This library, located on the Loyola Campus, was recently renovated and expanded at a cost of $8.4 million.

An even greater addition to facilities will come in two years when the downtown library is completed. This building will consist of four floors of library space, each floor equivalent in space to the entire Vanier Library. As Dr. Kenniff says, "It's not only the size, it will be the quality of the space and services that are offered in that space — the automation of card catalogues, as well as faster and better services for borrowing books and receiving technical services."

And on the aesthetic side, he discusses the appealing design of the new library. "If you are working on a regular basis in a space that is attractive and conducive to intellectual thought, then it becomes a motivating force."

Dr. Kenniff adds that the university is focusing its annual appeal for funds to buy more books and periodicals. "We should look forward to a quantum leap when the new building is open two years from now," he says.

Still more plans are in view, also promising to enhance graduate studies. Major steps are being taken to improve the quality of academic and administrative computing facilities and to develop research facilities for faculty.

Research Development Program

Next year Concordia will start the Faculty Research Development Program, which will provide $750,000 to seed new efforts by faculty to submit grant applications for research. "That will have an impact on the development of graduate studies because it's through research that you develop graduate studies, and in a sense, it's through graduate studies that you fuel research endeavours. The two are very closely linked," Dr. Kenniff says.

Concordia's record is already outstanding in the growth of research over the past decade, particularly in specific areas such as Psychology, Engineering, Sociology, Education, Biology and Communication Studies. Over that 10-year period, a 200% increase has been recorded throughout the University in external and internal funded research. In 1978-79, research funding totalled just over $3 million, compared with nearly $12.5 million in 1988-89.

As President of the Conference of Rectors and Principals of Quebec Universities, Dr. Kenniff sets the growth of graduate studies at Concordia within the context of the province. He would like to help correct the current situation in which the number of graduate degrees earned from Quebec universities is below the Canadian average. For instance, Ontario turns out approximately twice as many doctoral and master's students as Quebec.

Recruitment and Promotion

By expanding graduate programs at Concordia, the University will continue to do its part in closing this gap. Dr. Kenniff sees the need to promote Concordia as a graduate school and recruit students from across the country as well as from Quebec. Pointing to the benefits of earning degrees from more than one university, he says Concordia alumni who work at other Canadian universities can be encouraged to promote their alma mater as a possible choice for graduate studies. He also values publicity and promotion such as newsletters and attractive documentation, which is a successful route recently taken by the Division of Graduate Studies.

"In a highly specialized, sophisticated society such as ours, it is important for more young people to complete a graduate degree. So there's a challenge there," he says.

Not one to back away from a challenge, Dr. Kenniff looks to Concordia's future with enthusiasm. "What is exciting about the years ahead is that we now have the potential to really take off. The challenge will be to continue and maintain that pace in the areas where we are already succeeding and add new fields to our list of successes in graduate studies and research."

Upcoming Doctoral Examinations

GEORGANTAS, Antonios I.
Mechanical Engineering
Date: April 5, 1990 at 2:00 p.m.
Location: H 929-23
Title: *Techniques for Improving the Performance of a Simplified Electronic Fuel Controller with Incremental Actuation for Small Gas Turbine Engines*

SU, Hong
Mechanical Engineering
Date: April 12, 1990 at 10:00 a.m.
Location: CR-205, Concave Research Centre, 6277 St. Jacques St. West.
Title: *An Investigation of Vibration Isolation Systems Using Active, Semi-active and Tunable Passive Mechanisms with Applications to Vehicle Suspensions*

ROBERT KAVANAGH
Special Individual Program
Date: April 12, 1990 at 2:30 p.m.
Location: H-769
Title: *The Art of Earth and Fire: The Aesthetics of Robin George Collingwood and The Craft of The Studio Potter*

THOMAS G. BROWN
Psychology
Date: April 23, 1990 at 2:00 p.m.
Location: H-769
Title: *Heart Rate Reactivity to Mental Arithmetic: The Influence of Baseline Protocols and Task Demand Characteristics*

GAGNON-BOURGET, Francine
Art Education
Date: April 24, 1990 at 10-:00 a.m.
Location: H-762
Title: *Le rôle de la matière dans la qualité de l'image*

FELTHAM, Rosemary
Psychology
Date: April 30, 1990 at 2:00 p.m.
Location: H-773
Title: *Social Determinants of Social-cognitive Growth in Children: The Effects of Racial Group and Friendship*

The above examinations will take place in the Hall Building, 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. West, with the exception of the exam for Mr. Hong Su.

Patricia Verret
New Graduate Awards Officer

Patricia Verret

Patricia Verret joins the Division of Graduate Studies in April as the Graduate Awards Officer. Ms. Verret has worked in the Registrar's Office since 1981, holding the position of Administrative and Statistics Coordinator since 1984. In that capacity she was responsible for statistics in the Registrar's Office, making reports to various government offices and the university community, in addition to being involved in the implementation of various projects such as an enrolment forecasting model. Over the years she has served as the non-academic staff representative on various committees, including labour negotiations, employment equity, appeals board.

In her capacity of graduate awards officer, she plans to help the Division of Graduate Studies fulfill its role in the University's mission, goals and objectives. Part of this will be accomplished by working to increase the number of scholarships and fellowships given by Concordia and the University community at large. This in turn will enhance the University's image within the community, as well as both nationally and internationally, and attract a greater number of graduate students to Concordia. She looks forward to playing an active role in bringing the Division into the 1990s.

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